

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCI-06 VO-03 SCA-01 L-03 CPR-02 CU-04

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DRC-01 /057 W

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R 050946Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6610

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MOSCOW 3122

FOR SCI, EUR/SES, EUR/SOV

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS UR OEXC

SUBJ: LATE SUBMISSION OF OFFICIAL SOVIET VISA APPLICATIONS

1. AT MEETING AT MFA CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION MARCH 1, CONSOFFS
HANDED OVER NOTE TO CHIEF PASSPORT/VISA SECTION KUSTOV COMPLAINING
ABOUT FREQUENTLY LATE SUBMISSIONS OF SOVIET OFFICIAL VISA APPLI-
CATIONS FOR EMBASSY AND DEPT PROCESSING. NOTE IN PARTICULAR CITED
SUBMISSION AT COB FEB 21 (THURSDAY) OF APPLICATIONS FOR VISAS FOR
TWELVE-MEMBER SOVIET DELEGATION TO US-USSR JOINT COMMITTEE ON
WORLD OCEAN STUDIES WHICH OPENED IN WASHINGTON FEB 25 (MOSCOW
2581). NOTE OBSERVED THAT MFA IN EFFECT GAVE USG ONE WORKING DAY
IN WHICH TO PROCESS AND ISSUE TWELVE VISAS, ALTHOUGH DATES OF
SESSION AND COMPOSITION OF SOVIET DELEGATION WERE LARGELY SET AS
OF DECEMBER 1973.

2. MARCH 1 NOTE CONCLUDED BY STATING THAT LATE TRANSMITTALS OF
SOVIET PASSPORTS TO EMBASSY CAN ONLY JEOPARDIZE THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF PROGRAMS CAREFULLY DEVELOPED WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF
SEVERAL US-USSR COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS. SOVIET
AUTHORITIES WERE ADDITIONALLY REMINDED THAT USG
PROCEDURES NORMALLY REQUIRE THREE WEEKS FOR
PROCESSING VISA APPLICATIONS BY SOVIET CITIZENS.
(COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS GENERALLY REQUESTED THAT
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APPLICATIONS BE RECEIVED THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO SOVIET

TRAVELERS' DEPARTURE. IT IS RECOGNIZED HOWEVER THAT
RULE VARIES DEPENDENT ON SPECIFIC EXCHANGE AND COOPERA-
TIVE AGREEMENT. ARTICLE XVIII OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT
ON CONTACTS, EXCHANGES AND COOPERATION OF JUNE 1973
SPECIFIES THAT SUCH VISA APPLICATIONS BE SUBMITTED, " AS
A RULE, AT LEAST FOURTEEN DAYS BEFORE THE ESTIMATED
TIME OF DEPARTURE." END COMMENT)

3. IN DISCUSSION WHICH FOLLOWED CONSOFFS REITERATED
POINTS IN NOTE WHILE KUSTOV, AGREEING THAT LATE VISA
APPLICATIONS WERE TROUBLESOME FOR ALL PARTIES, PROMISED
TO LOOK INTO SITUATION.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: JUDGING FROM RECENT FREQUENCY OF
LATE VISA APPLICATIONS, SOVIET BUREAUCRATS HAVE COME TO
DEPEND TOO GREATLY ON EFFICIENCY OF EMBASSY-DEPARTMENT-
WASHINGTON AGENCIES' VISA-PROCESSING AND CLEARANCE
MACHINERY. WE JUDGE REPRECUSIONS AT THIS EMBASSY OF
LATE SOVIET SUBMISSIONS (INCREASING USE OF IMMEDIATE OR
PRIORITY DESIGNATION ON TELEGRAMS, WEEKEND VISA ISSUANCES,
ETC.) IN FACT ONLY DESCRIBE SMALL PART OF TOTAL INCONVENIENCE
CAUSED USG PERSONNEL. PURPOSE OF EMBASSY NOTE WAS TO TRY
TO CHECK THIS TENDENCY BEFORE IT BECAME INSTITUTIONALIZED
AT MFA AND BEFORE IT DELAYED A PARTICULAR EXCHANGE. IT
WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF EUR/SES, SCI AND OTHER DEPT OFFICES
DEALING WITH SOVIET EMBASSY ON EXCHANGE/COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS
WOULD FOLLOW-UP EMBASSY APPROACH WITH SOVIET COUNTERPARTS
AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY, IF POSSIBLE BEFORE OFFICIAL SOVIET
TRAVEL SEASON IS IN FULL SWING.
EXEMPT STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MOSCOW03122
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740367/aaaackoz.tel
Line Count: 91
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 JUN 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <11 JUN 2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LATE SUBMISSION OF OFFICIAL SOVIET VISA APPLICATIONS
TAGS: CVIS, OEXC, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005